



Judd Gregg, Chairman
Contact: Betsy Holahan 202-224-6011
Cara Duckworth 202-224-2574

For Immediate Release

July 22, 2005

Senate Unanimously Passes Senator Gregg's Bill to Improve Patient Safety
S. 544 Reduces Medical Errors by Encouraging Information Sharing

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Senate last night unanimously passed legislation sponsored by Senator Judd Gregg with Senators Enzi, Frist, Jeffords and Kennedy that would improve the safety and quality of health care delivered across the country.

“Medical errors cause up to 265 preventable deaths a day,” said Senator Gregg. “Even one preventable death is too many. This legislation allows collaboration among health professionals to prevent mistakes from being repeated and to save lives.”

The legislation, S. 544, would create a system in which health care professionals can share information about medical errors without fear of litigation so their mistakes can be prevented in the future. When this legislation is enacted, providers will be able to voluntarily submit information to Patient Safety Organizations, which can identify patterns of errors, evaluate their causes and design necessary systems changes.

“Physicians and other health care professionals cannot communicate openly about medical errors and how to prevent them due to the constant fear of litigation,” said Senator Gregg. “This legislation promotes an environment of communication and education to improve patient safety. I urge the House to take prompt action so that this important measure can move quickly to the President.”